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THE ROUND TABLE

MEDICATED DRAMA

I wish to enter a protest against the use of the *Trojan Women* or any other Greek tragedy as a means of furthering a peace movement, raising money for the Red Cross, or stirring up sentiment for any specific cause, however worthy. These great expressions of Greek genius have a message of their own which is of infinitely greater moment to the world than even the European war. To use them as mere instruments of propaganda is a crime against art. It is almost like robbing the sheeted dead. Let us have no more of it.

Nor, so far as the *Trojan Women* is concerned, is this diversion of the play to sentimental purposes the worst feature of the performance. On at least one occasion and probably upon many more occasions, the play itself was preceded by a sermon. In peevish and at times whining accents, the speaker, clad most incongruously in a business suit, dictated to the audience the mood in which the drama must be heard. "These women," said he naïvely, "are not three thousand years old." He went on to say, or at least to imply, that they were women of modern Europe whose homes had been invaded by one of the belligerent armies. If any member of the audience, he said, was not prepared to think of them in that light, he could just go to the box office and get his money back. And there was much more of this same sort of fatuousness. It is hard to conceive of anything in worse taste or less likely to put the hearer in the proper frame of mind for appreciating a Greek tragedy. If the writer did not at once go to the box office for his money, it was because he was stupefied at such a lapse of theatrical good manners. For him, at least, the play was ruined. The Greek figures were hopelessly overlaid by visions of bursting shrapnel in the Carpathians and Cossack raids in Eastern Prussia.

Why should anyone be allowed to deface these lovely glimpses of the antique world by spraying over them an ill-smelling tincture of modernity?

BALAUSTION

A FURTHER WORD ON GRAMMATICAL TERMINOLOGY

We members of the Joint Committee on Grammatical Nomenclature have read with great interest the good-humored comments and criticisms upon our report by Miss Blount and Professors Black and Wannamaker.